



Bangladeshi workers stranded at the Giuliana pier in the port of Benghazi yesterday. Thousands of foreign workers fled Libya by air, land and sea in a vast exodus from the oil-rich North African state.

Govt still wants

FROM PAGE 1 admitting that looting by Libyans and restriction on movement is causing serious problems for foreigners and international agencies even.

At a press conference at the ministry, he said it was very difficult to evacuate 20,000 to 30,000 Bangladeshis out of 60,000, when journalists refer to evacuations by Chinese, Thai, South Korean and even Indian governments.

Earlier, he had a meeting with officials from the ministries of foreign affairs, home, civil aviation, shipping, the Prime Minister's Office, international agencies--International Organisation for Migration (IOM), International Committee of the Red Cross and United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.

Expatriates' Welfare Secretary Zafar Ahmed Khan told The Daily Star that the government is making a contingency plan for evacuation with planes and ships but that would be required if something like international armed operation starts in Libya.

"Not that all would like to come home. Because, once they return they would not be able to go back to that country with jobs for which they already spent quite a good sum," Zafar said, adding that this is why the government is asking the employer companies to temporarily relocate them to safer places in or outside Libya.

The government is asking the international agencies to help relocate the stranded Bangladeshis and arrange food, he said.

A few companies have already agreed to bring home around 6,000 Bangladeshis, while 804 were moved to Greece by China State Construction and Engineering Corporation. Three hundred

entered Tunisia and 2,450 crossed the Egyptian border where the IOM and Red Cross are taking care of them, he said.

At home, relatives of Bangladeshis workers in Libya are waiting for the government to send transports to bring them home since many of them were left by their employers in Libya.

However, Tripoli remains in the control of ruler of 41 years Col Gaddafi. UN refugee agency UNHCR says nearly 100,000 migrants have fled from Libya into neighbouring Tunisia and Egypt last week.

The UNHCR warned of a growing humanitarian crisis. Many guest workers have no way to get home and are sleeping out in the open, reports the BBC.

"I came to Libya with a dream, but will the life end here?" said Touhidul Islam sobbing and talking to The Daily Star Saturday from a Tripoli labour camp housing around 2,000 Bangladeshi workers.

The company Libyan Saraya said they could return home only if Bangladesh sent ships or planes for them, he said, adding that they cannot go out of the camp since there is no transport and there is risk of robbery.

Mabruka Toaha said her father Abu Zafar Mohammad Toaha who is working at Sirte Oil Company in Marshal Brega has been passing days in fear amid clashes and looting around him.

Indians left Libya on an Indian ship but 30 Bangladeshi engineers including Toaha remain there, Mabruka said urging the government to arrange their evacuation.

Around 2,500 Bangladeshis from Brega moved close to Egypt border but could not cross it, she said.

Meanwhile, more than 200 workers from Chapainawabganj, 16 workers from Pabna and 3,000 from Shariatpur are trapped in Libya, correspondents from the districts reported.

Mariam Begum of Chapainawabganj said her husband Aminul Islam and several others are running short of food and water.

"I am passing days in worry. I don't know when I will go back to Bangladesh. Pray for me," Mariam quoted her husband as saying over the telephone. He begged pardon from his wife in case he could not make it.

"Please save our son. Please tell the government to do something for our son," said Hasem Ali whose son Israfil, 30, told him they have no food or water and fear dying of hunger.

Expatriates' Welfare Minister Mosharraf Hossain said normalcy is returning in Benghazi and the situation in Saba province, where around 15,000 Bangladeshis work, is normal.

However, in Tripoli there has been violence, he said, adding that the Bangladeshi nationals who are in small groups are being advised to join bigger groups in camps because staying together in big numbers is safer.

Foreign Minister Dipu Moni is flying for Geneva today to seek help of the ICRC and the IOM in relocating the stranded Bangladeshis.

Two teams yesterday were dispatched to Egypt and Tunisia to help stranded guest workers with travel documents required to enter those countries, Mosharraf said.

Human rights body Ain O Salish Kendra yesterday expressed deep concern over the state of Bangladeshis in Libya. It urged the government to take prompt action to ensure their safety and to bring them home.

Tk 21cr goes

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from below the ground, as most of the surface water is contaminated. This heavy reliance on groundwater causes the water table to lower three to four metres a year, said sources in Dhaka Water and Sewerage Authority (Wasa).

It was to solve this scarcity of safe surface water the government undertook the Buriganga-Turag River Cleaning Project.

Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Authority began implementing the first phase of the project in May last year, and has already spent over Tk 21 crore.

BIWTA was supposed to clean three kilometres of the Buriganga from Babubazar to Kamrangirchar and one kilometre of the Turag in Tongi.

It is spending Tk 285 to dredge and grab per cubic metre of garbage from the riverbed and more than that to collect the floating and solid waste from the riverbank.

"We know the project is not yielding satisfying results. And that's why we are going slower now," said a BIWTA official requesting anonymity.

Asked then why they are spending public money, the official replied, "Tk 21.5 crore has already been allocated for this project. So we are just continuing with the work."

According to the project proposal, the riverbeds in the capital are clogged with thick layers of polythene, coconut shells, plastic, mud and bricks.

Two metres from the edge of the riverbeds and one metre from the middle need to be excavated, says the project proposal, which was funded from the climate change trust funds generated by government revenue.

In December last year, the DoE collected samples from five different points along the Buriganga for determining the quality of the river water.

Laboratory analysis of the samples shows that presence of dissolved oxygen was between 0.50-0.84 mg/L, while standard surface water is 5 mg/L in Bangladesh.

Besides, pH, a measure of the acidity, was identified to be between 7 and 7.5.

The standard DO requirement for fish and other aquatic lives is 5 mg/L and pH requirement is 6.5 as per the set standard in Bangladesh.

Earlier, researchers from Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology (Buet) found that oxygen levels were 0.7 and 0.25 at Chadnighat point, 0.27 and 0.63 in Norai near Trimohini, and 0.27 and 0.63 in the Turag at Tongi before and after the monsoon respectively.

A three-year research finds that some invertebrates and small organisms come to life in these

ADP slashed

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allocation, which is 23 percent of the total amount.

Of the other priority sectors, power, oil, gas and natural resources sector got Tk 6,088.58 crore or 17 percent; transport sector Tk 5,242.27 crore or 15 percent; education and religious affairs sector Tk 5,053.84 crore or 14 percent; infrastructure, water supply and housing sector Tk 3,346.14 crore or 10 percent; health, nutrition, manpower and family welfare sector Tk 3,164.68 crore or 9 percent.

The R&B authorities have submitted a Tk 300 crore project titled "Improvement of existing distribution system to meet the demand of irrigation" to the planning commission to boost the irrigation.

But the defence ministry informed the sub-committee that it was not possible to communicate with ATM Amin, while Bari is at large, Menon added.

The then education adviser Ayub Quadri and the

rivers when water flow increases in the rains. But these life forms disappear in the dry season, the researchers add.

The Institute of Water Modelling (IWM) and the World Bank conducted a survey of pollution in Dhaka rivers in 2007 that showed there are over 300 various effluent discharge outlets in the capital and Narayanganj.

Of these, 19 outlets carry mixed flows of industrial and household waste into the rivers around the capital.

The study also observed that the groundwater system is being contaminated more in areas where aquifers are recharged from the riverbeds.

Over 300 major industrial units are still dumping their liquid waste into the rivers, say DoE officials.

Things have not changed much despite DoE drives against pollution. The environmental watchdog has so far fined over 100 industries for not installing Effluent Treatment Plant (ETP), which is mandatory as per the law.

DoE Deputy Director General Sobhan, also a member of the project's monitoring committee, suggests continuing with the project. He said, "If they remove one cubic metre of garbage from the river, space for one cubic metre of water will increase."

Besides, he added, measures should be taken to stop dumping of human excreta into the rivers.

Teacher killed

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"Just before the tiffin period, he entered the classroom and chopped Arifa to death with a sharp weapon. The culprit managed to escape in a van," he said.

Following information by locals, police have identified the van puller Md Robiul of Vainapara village. "We have arrested Robiul from Chowbaria. We are trying to nab the killer," the SP said.

Newly married Arifa used to tell her husband that she would die anytime. She often lapsed into a melancholy mood, quoting her husband police said.

"We are collecting information regarding her past relationships and secret matter to find clues behind the murder," said Md Habibul Islam, officer-in-charge of Ataikula Police Station.

Contacted, Arifa's husband Md Alamgir Hossain said "I cannot imagine why she was murdered in this way. She did not tell me anything of her pains or troubled past. How could I know the reason behind her murder?"

Md Shariful Islam, headmaster of Vainapara Primary School, said Arifa married Alamgir Hossain, a teacher of Nandanpur Primary School, in December, 2010.

"Arifa used to stay as a lodger teacher at a house in the village. Her marriage took place in the lodger house instead of her father Abdul Halim's house in Sirajganj," he said adding that she seemed morose for the last few days.

"We are very shocked that our colleague was killed inside the classroom. The culprits must be punished," said Md Masud Karim, a teacher of another primary school in the area.

Arifa's body was sent to Pabna Medical College Hospital morgue for an autopsy.

Meanwhile, Arifa's brother Anisur Rahman filed a case with Ataikula Police Station.

Teachers, students of different educational institutions in the upazila demanded exemplary punishment to the culprits.

Saiful Islam said on information they caught the fake examinees in the examination hall. Later, it was found that the madrasa superintendent and the teacher arranged the opportunity for two girls in place of the real examinees.



Writers, readers pay tributes to Prof Azad

RAKIB AHMMED

Writers, readers and poets yesterday recalled the brutal attack made on eminent writer late Prof Humayun Azad seven years ago near Amar Ekushey Boi Mela premises.

They demanded the authorities of Bangla Academy to declare February 27 as Humayun Azad Day.

In 2004, the poet was severely injured following the attack near the book fair premises and died a few months later.

Talking to The Daily Star on the fair premises, writers and fans alike expressed their concern that anti-cultural and anti-progressive forces are still prevalent in the country.

"The attack on Humayun Azad was not an attack on any individual but a cumulative attack on the culture and literature," said Muhammad Samad, a poet.

"It was an attack on the exercise of free thinking," said another poet Khondokar Ashraf Hossain

Everyone recalled fond memories of

writer and freethinker Humayun Azad and paid respect to his memories by holding a brief rally at the fair premises in the afternoon. They demanded the perpetrators to be brought to justice.

Kajal Abdullah, a fan of the celebrated poet said, "I will never forget the tragic moment when I heard that my favourite writer had been attacked," adding, "It still hurts to think that the culprits were not caught."

Meanwhile, the fair witnessed a huge crowd as the month-long festival will end today.

The publishers expressed satisfaction over the presence of people throughout the month but expressed their concern over the pirated books sold in different stalls. Such trend has certainly killed the image of the fair, they said.

As many as 2,924 new titles hit the fair as of yesterday since it began on February 1. Poetries topped the list with 669 new titles followed by 477 novels and 381 collections of stories.

Humdinger ends

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Swann managed 15 from the penultimate over bowled by Piyush Chawla, which included two sixes but also the wicket of Bresnan.

With 14 required of the last over bowled by Munaf Patel, Swann took two off the first ball and then sneaked a single to hand the strike over to England's Pakistani born Ajmal Shehzad. Perhaps the intercontinental rivalry played a role, but Shehzad responded by hitting a six off the third ball, straight over the bowler's head. The batsmen stole a single off the next ball leaving them to score four off the last two. Swann heaved the first to midwicket for two, but despite a full-blooded drive from the last ball Yousuf Pathan made a diving save at cover to ensure that both sides took a point each from the match.

After India piled on 338 in the first innings, England replied aggressively, and for much of their innings looked in front of the hosts. Captain Strauss' seminal 158 looked like transforming a monumental task into a cakewalk and supporting him was Ian Bell (69), who with his captain put on 170 runs in just over 25 overs.

The pair came together at the fall of Jonathan Trott's (16) wicket with the score on 111, and took the game away from India with aggressive running and well-timed boundaries. Zaheer Khan, India's standout bowler, turned things around in the 43rd over, just when England looked like running away with the match. He picked up the two top performers of England's innings off consecutive deliveries, first getting Bell to sky an over-the-cover shot to Virat Kohli at cover, then getting the England captain leg-before off the very next ball with a fantastic yorker.

England did not roll over after that, even as the last recognised batsman, Matt Prior, got out with 50 runs still needed off the last 28 deliveries and they ensured that they at least went home with a point.

Earlier, Sachin Tendulkar once again matched the hopes of an expectant nation with a record-breaking century as India piled up 338.

Tendulkar reached his century off 103 balls when he glanced Bresnan for four, a shot greeted by raucous cheers from a near-capacity crowd.

SCORES IN BRIEF

INDIA: 338 all out in 49.5 overs (Sehwag 35, Tendulkar 120, Gambhir 51, Yuvraj 58, Dhoni 31, Pathan 14, Kohli 8; Bresnan 5-48)

ENGLAND: 338 for 8 in 50 overs (Strauss 158, Pietersen 31, Trott 16, Bell 69, Yardy 13, Bresnan 14, Swann 15 not out; Zaheer 3-64, Patel 2-70, Chawla 2-71)

Result: Match tied.

Man-of-the-match: Andrew Strauss.

CID seeks

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Second Additional Metropolitan Sessions Judge's Court, Dhaka.

Abdul Kader Akhund, senior special superintendent of CID and investigation officer of the case, submitted the time prayer.

Judge Mohamad Zohurul Haque of the Metropolitan Sessions Judge's Court is expected to hear the petition today.

Earlier on November 30 last year, the same court gave three months to CID to complete the probe and the time expired yesterday.

The court has so far given 19 months in seven phases for the investigation.

At least 23 people including AL leader Ivy Rahman were killed and scores injured in the grenade attack at Bangabandhu Avenue in Dhaka.